Woodbury University Forum
Working Together to Meet the Future

Summary Prepared by Gensler
October, 2005
**Introduction & Overview**

As a launch to their university wide strategic academic planning process, Woodbury University conducted a University Forum on Tuesday, October 11, 2005 in the Commons Building. Nearly 110 faculty, staff, and students came together to listen to presentations from three leading thinkers in the areas of business, design and academia, and to begin discussions around a vision for the University's future. Organized by David Rosen, Vice President, Academic Affairs and Barbara Bowley, Associate Professor and Chair, WASC Accreditation Team (RISC), the event was facilitated and moderated by Loree Goffigon and Jim Oswald of Gensler Consulting, Santa Monica.

President Nielsen kicked off the day by welcoming Forum participants and introducing the Forum purpose. He asked their support in helping to "create a roadmap for the University's future." This idea was expanded upon by Barbara Bowley who reviewed the overall WASC process and emphasized the need to "clarify our individual identity." Barbara stressed the need to develop a vision for the future; a future that will be different, unpredictable, and evolving at a rapid pace. As part of a tradition of developing knowledge and passing that knowledge onto future generations, it must be the University's mission to develop tools to better understand the future and "grow professionals who are lifelong learners."

Jim Oswald briefly reviewed the session purpose and process, provided a detailed overview of the agenda, and described the participant introduction exercise called "Headlines from the Future." The group was asked to "fast-forward" to the year 2025 with Woodbury celebrating the 20th anniversary of the first University Forum (this event). The were asked to imagine or "vision" the impacts Woodbury, its faculty and students, have had on the world, their successes, accomplishments, and acknowledgements successes, and how those would be captured in a newspaper headline.

Some examples were: "WU redesigns campus structures made from 90% recycled materials;" "First female president of US graduated from WU;" "Woodbury graduate is first to set foot on Mars;" "Woodbury celebrates 10 years in China;" "Woodbury - the only University fully staffed with Alumni."

**Presentations**

The next item on the agenda was a series of presentations: **Writing the History of the Future - What's Next?** Loree Goffigon introduced the 3 speakers, Steve PonTell, The La Jolla Institute, David Gensler, COO Gensler, and Dave Logan, JLS Consulting. A brief overview of their presentations follows.

**Steve PonTell**

**What will society and communities look like in 10-15 years?**

Steve discussed 4 key themes with respect to Woodbury's place in society and communities of the future:

- **Place**: Place matters more than ever. As a place-based organization it is essential to determine the kinds of places you want to create.
- **Connectivity**: Who knows you. The importance of your network, your alumni, your connection to the business world. This is connectivity.
- **Time**: How can you help your students become effective in a world that values time.
- **Creativity**: How can you leverage creativity in Southern California. What are new models to make creativity pay-off in a new economy.

**Dave Gensler**

**What will the world look like?**

David presented the "Gensler story," taking the audience through Gensler's beginning, with a focus on interiors, design and strategy, the affects of the "Dot-bomb," the economic rebuilding that occurred thereafter, and the forces of change guiding their re-visioning. He identified 5 key drivers of demand as *aging population, workers around the world, growth in developing countries, globalization, and technology integration*, and talked about how Gensler as an organization has committed itself to *sustainability and social responsibility*. He talked about pushing the envelope and the importance of *strategy, entrepreneurialism and outside agitators*. In closing, David stressed that in light of an unforeseeable future, organizations should focus on importing excellence, fostering critical thinking, and developing communicators.

**Dave Logan**

**What will the world of education look like?**

Dave presented the 3 key things successful organizations do:

- **Embark on a relentless quest for their core values.** Continuously understand, clarify and communicate your core values.
- **Move from an agreement to an alignment model.** Don't simply be driven by dialogue; be driven by action.
- **Move from an expert to a partner model.** The expert consults no one. The master engages his/her partners into a discussion. Be a master.

**Panel Discussion**

Following the 3 presentations, the panelists engaged in a brief Q&A session with the group.
Small Group Discussions

After lunch, the participants broke into small groups and identified key educational goals and student characteristics to address the issues raised in the morning session. Specifically, they were asked to answer the following question: “What attributes and/or characteristics should Woodbury students possess when they graduate in order to be prepared to tackle the issues/futures described in the morning session by our panelists?”

The groups recorded their discussions on flip-charts and summarized their priority goals and characteristics on posters. Participants then reviewed the posters and indicated their agreement and disagreement with the ideas presented by marking those they liked with a green dot and those they did not with a red or orange dot.

Loree Goffigon facilitated the discussion about the goals and comments posted, soliciting feedback from participants about the various issues highlighted.

Based on that discussion and the notes Jim Oswald captured on the large scale wallgraphic, the following areas seemed to emerge as key summary points:

**Educational Goals**

**Holistic education - Multi-disciplinary approach.** Woodbury should adopt a holistic approach to teaching and learning, provide a multi-disciplinary education, and strive to integrate technology, science, business, and design/arts as a teaching/learning model in order to produce well-rounded and balanced professionals. Instructors should instill and foster a sense of curiosity, creativity, and flexibility in all Woodbury students.

**Maximize student potential** Recognize students as “diamonds in the rough” and work diligently to help them truly realize their potential. Embrace the reality of the student demographic.

**Student Characteristics**

**Question/Challenge the Conventional Way.** Woodbury graduates should be absolutely comfortable with change and ambiguity and accustomed to questioning existing paradigms and ways of doing things. Graduating risk takers, self-starters, and initiative-prone students should be our goal.

**Global & social responsibility.** Woodbury graduates should possess a broader knowledge and understanding of the world ("a cosmopolitan awareness"). Graduates should have a higher level appreciation of life and culture and they should also possess an acute understanding of what it is act and live sustainably.

**Sophisticated communication skills.** Woodbury graduates should have strong oral and written skills. They should be analytical and critical thinkers and be adept at summarizing, evaluating, and communicating information.

Wrap Up and Next Steps

Barbora Bowley thanked participants for their time and commitment to the first University Forum and spoke briefly about next steps. She explained that the team would prepare a high level summary of the key findings from this meeting, distribute those to the departments, and continue work on developing the elements of an identity statement for Woodbury that would serve as the basis for future strategic and master planning efforts.
Event Photographs
Event Photographs
Wall Graphics

WELCOME!
PRESIDENT NIELSEN: THANKS FOR BEING HERE.

SHARPEN OUR FOCUS
WE EACH PLAY A ROLE IN THE UNIVERSITY'S FUTURE.

CREATING A ROADMAP FOR THE FUTURE

WACC PROCESS: HELPING THE CRITERIA

CLARIFYING INSTITUTIONAL IDENTIFY

PREPARING OUR Gwhole FOR THE FUTURE

OUR RATE OF CHANGE IS INCREDIBLE!!
OUR MISSION: EMPOWER PROFESSIONALS
ARTICULATE, LEAD, INSPIRE

WE MUST DEVELOP A VISION FOR THE FUTURE.
WE MUST PASS ON KNOWLEDGE, TRANSFER KNOWLEDGE TO FUTURE GENERATIONS.
Wall Graphics

Emerging Themes
- Holistic Education
- Communication Skills
- Multi Disciplinary Approach
- Integration
- Design Thinking

Challenges to Subvert the Dominant Paradigm

Best Environments to Foster Creativity

Responsibility + Accountability

Maximizing Student Potential

Questions/Comments

Basic Competencies
- Non GPA Based
- Non Graduation

Raising Standards to Admission

We need to graduate more of our students

Foundation year to catch up